



# Environmental News

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October 15, 2001

## **EPA Gives Award to Houston Clean Air Partners**

Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recognized the efforts of the many partners who helped pass the Texas Senate Bill 5, which led the way for economic incentives to achieve the local clean air goals with an Environmental Excellence award.

The coalition of local and state government, environmental advocates, industry proponents and community leaders worked together to assure that the clean air commitments in the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for the Houston/Galveston area can be met. Their efforts have made the plan one of the most innovative and technically advanced plans ever devised.

Texas Senate Bill 5, also called the Texas Emissions Reduction Plan, creates economic incentives to encourage Texans to reduce air pollution and establishes a statewide Emissions Reduction Fund.

This award recognizes the leadership and hard work of the groups and individuals listed below in protecting the environment and public health. The awards also demonstrate EPA's confidence in the result of their efforts, Senate Bill 5.

EPA Regional Administrator Gregg Cooke said, "This is the first time in history EPA has given SIP credit for an economic incentive plan. This is an incredible accomplishment, sure to become a national model while bringing cleaner air to Texas."

A list of awardees follows.

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## **EPA Awards Clean Air Partners**

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### Awardees:

- The Texas Clean Air Working Group, a collection of government and business leaders in areas of the state with serious air pollution problems that helped build legislative support for a clean air agenda. Awards were presented to Group Co-Chairs George W. Beatty, Jr., of the Greater Houston Partnership and Collin County Judge Ron Harris of McKinney.
- The Greater Houston Partnership, an organization that coordinates metro Houston's chamber-of-commerce, economic development, and world trade functions. Awards were presented to Environmental Chairman Kelly Frels and Business Coalition for Clean Air Chairman Charles Duncan.
- The Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, the state's environmental department, that provided data, feasibility evaluations, and technical support for development of the bill. The award was presented to Chairman Robert J. Huston and Commissioner R.B. "Ralph" Marquez.
- State Senator J. E. "Buster" Brown of Lake Jackson, who authored and sponsored the bill in the Texas Senate.
- State Representative Warren Chisum of Pampa, who chairs the House Committee on Environmental Regulation.
- State Representative Steve Wolens of Dallas, who chairs the House State Affairs Committee and who sponsored the bill in the House.
- Judge Robert Eckels, county judge of Harris County, was a leader in the HGAC, and helped resolve air quality and transportation challenges.
- Houston Mayor Lee P. Brown was an early proponent of the bill and assumed a leadership role to encourage passage. Mayor Brown also cooperated pro-actively with the state to help develop and complete the Houston clean air plan.
- Texas Governor Rick Perry, who supported the legislation and signed it into law. Governor Perry highlighted the significance of Senate Bill 5 in a public bill signing held at Houston's Enron Field this summer.
- The Texas office of Public Citizen, a national non-profit public interest organization, was a principal architect of Senate Bill 5. Public Citizen worked to ensure participation from citizens and organizations. The award was presented to Tom "Smitty" Smith, Director of the Texas office.
- The Houston-Galveston Area Council, a voluntary association of local governments and local elected officials in the 13-county Gulf Coast Planning Region, coordinated several innovative pollution reduction initiatives. The award was presented to Jack Steele, Executive Director of the Houston-Galveston Area Council.